

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-15 (Canceled).

Claim 16 (New): A method of increasing precision in controlling a path of a product through a roller leveler including a fixed support stand, two leveling assemblies including parallel rolls, the assemblies being placed above and below a strip respectively, members for setting imbrications of the rolls, and means for measuring leveling forces at least on two sides of the roller leveler, the method comprising:

a theoretical presetting model giving at least one reference value for presetting the imbrications;

during a leveling operation, at least one value of separation of the leveling rolls is measured directly, the at least one value being compared with reference values; and

the members for setting the position of the leveling rolls are acted upon to keep the measured values equal to the reference values with increased precision so as to keep the path of the product to be leveled in the leveler in accordance with an undulation predicted by the model for implementing the leveling operation.

Claim 17 (New): The method of increasing the control of the path of the product in a leveler as claimed in claim 16, wherein first and second measurements of the value of the separation of the leveling rolls are taken, the first measurement at entry of the leveler and the second measurement at exit of the leveler respectively, wherein each of the measurements is compared with the reference value given by the model, and wherein the members for setting the position of the leveling rolls, at the entry and exit of the leveler respectively, are acted upon to keep the measured value equal to the reference value with increased precision to

achieve a decrease in degree of plastic deformation predicted by the model for implementing the leveling operation.

Claim 18 (New): The method of controlling the path of the product through a leveler as claimed in claim 16, wherein a measurement of the value of the separation of each of the leveling rolls is taken and each of the measurements is compared with the reference value given by the model, and wherein individual members for setting the position of each of the leveling rolls is acted upon to keep the measured value equal to the reference value with increased precision so as to achieve undulation and decrease in degree of plastic deformation that are predicted by the model for implementing the leveling operation.

Claim 19 (New): The method of controlling the path of the product through a leveler as claimed in claim 16, wherein equileveling of the work rolls is carried out using a flat machined plate of known thickness by modifying the position of the work rolls in a differential manner by a lateral tilt from one side onto the other so as to equalize the leveling forces on the two sides of the leveler that are measured by the measurement devices.

Claim 20 (New): The method of controlling the path of the product through a leveler as claimed in claim 19, wherein the equileveling is carried out using a running plate by modifying the position of the work rolls in a differential manner by a lateral tilt from one side onto the other, and wherein average values of the forces recorded by the measurement devices on each side during a run are equalized.

Claim 21 (New): A parallel-roll leveling installation for implementing the method as claimed in claim 16, comprising:

- a fixed support stand;
- two leveler assemblies of parallel rolls placed above and below the strip respectively;
- devices for setting imbrication of the rolls;
- means for measuring leveling forces at least on each side of the leveler; and
- at least one device enabling separation of the leveling rolls at at least one point to be measured directly.

Claim 22 (New): The parallel-roll leveling installation as claimed in claim 21, further comprising at least one electronic device for slaving measured separation of the leveling rolls to a theoretical value given by a model by acting on the imbrication-setting devices.

Claim 23 (New): The parallel-roll leveling installation as claimed in claim 22, wherein the imbrication-setting devices are hydraulically controlled.

Claim 24 (New): The parallel-roll leveling installation as claimed in claim 21, further comprising a device enabling separation of the leveling rolls at at least first and second points to be measured directly, the first point located in an entry zone and the second point located in an exit zone of the leveler.

Claim 25 (New): The parallel-roll leveling installation as claimed in claim 24, further comprising at least one electronic device for slaving measured separation of the leveling rolls located in the entry zone and in the exit zone of the leveler respectively to the theoretical value given by a model for the separation of the rolls located in the entry zone and the exit

zone of the leveler respectively by acting independently on the devices for setting the imbrication of the rolls in each of the entry and exit zones respectively.

Claim 26 (New): The parallel-roll leveling installation as claimed in claim 25, wherein the imbrication-setting devices are hydraulically controlled.

Claim 27 (New): The parallel-roll leveling installation as claimed in claim 21, further comprising a device enabling separation of each pair of leveling work rolls to be measured directly and separately.

Claim 28 (New): The parallel-roll leveling installation as claimed in claim 27, further comprising at least one means for individually setting a position of each leveling roll and at least one electronic device for slaving measured separation of each of the leveling rolls to the theoretical value given by a model for the separation of each of the rolls by acting independently on their imbrication-setting device.

Claim 29 (New): The parallel-roll leveling installation as claimed in claim 28, wherein the device for setting the imbrication of each roll is hydraulically controlled.

Claim 30 (New): The parallel-roll leveling installation as claimed in claim 23, wherein the at least one electronic device for slaving the measured separation of the leveling rolls to the theoretical value given by the model that the installation includes makes it possible to set a differential lateral tilt of the rolls on one side relative to the other with respect to a setpoint value.